Volume XCVII No. 6 November 10, 1972 40 cents

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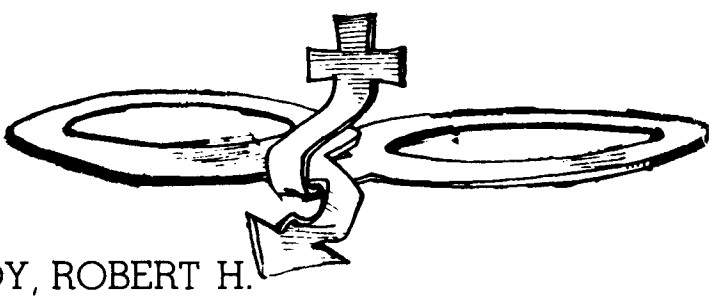

EUGENE FONTINELL

COMMENTARY: LOUIS DUPRE, MONIKA KONRAD HELLWIG, EUGENE C. KENNEDY, ROBERT H. SPRINGER, MARGARET O'BRIEN STEINFELS, MICHAEL ZEIK

SAUL MALOFF **CULTURAL CRITICISM**
AGOSTINO BONO **OLD SOLDIER JUAN PERON**
COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR. **ARRIVEDERCI, ROMA**
JOAN McCOY **FARM VISITOR**
JAMES H. FOREST **ROGER SHINN'S WARS**

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NEWS & VIEWS

Nixon's Vetoes

Richard Nixon chose affluent Westchester County and the steps of Tuckahoe Village Hall to pledge the vetoes of the last week of October "so that we will not have a new wave of crippling inflation and there will be no need for higher taxes."

It could only have been more incongruous if he had chosen the parlor of Nelson Rockefeller's Pocantico Hills manor house for the declaration. Westchester is one of the richest counties in the U.S.; inflation there means a slightly smaller boat and running the second car three months beyond family's deadline.

Whatever, the vetoes of October's end, beginning with the veto of the Federal Water Pollution Act of 1972 (quickly overridden by Congress), make Nixon one of the veto-ingest Presidents of American history. Not that he shouldn't veto; it's just that he vetoes the wrong things. There's billions for war and arms and research into more sophisticated weaponry, but pennies, relatively speaking, for domestic programs.

The Labor Research Association recently compiled a list of earlier Nixon vetoes. It makes for instructive reading.

Vetoed: a bill providing $19.7 billion for Health, Education, Welfare and Labor, 1/26/70;

Vetoed: $2.8 billion for hospital construction, 6/22/70 (overridden);

Vetoed: $4.4 billion for education, 8/11/70 (overridden);

Vetoed: $18 billion for housing, urban development, veterans and space, 8/11/70;

Vetoed: a bill establishing limits on campaign spending, 10/12/70;

Vetoed: $9.5 billion for manpower training and public service employment, 12/16/70;

Vetoed: a bill establishing federal programs to train more doctors for general practice, 12/26/70;

Vetoed: a pay raise for federal blue-collar workers, 1/1/71;

Vetoed: $2 billion for public works jobs, 6/29/71;

Vetoed: funds for economic opportunities and $2.1 billion for child development programs, 12/19/71;

Vetoed: funds for public broadcasting, 6/20/72.

Vetoes such as these point up the cockeyed priorities of Nixon's budgets, and inevitably produce the scandalous per capita budgetary breakdown for each man, woman and child in the U.S. of $410 for defense, $125 for war, $19 for space research, $19 for foreign aid, 89 cents for cancer research.

Abnormal Normalcy

Sister Maria del Rey, a "special correspondent" in the Philippines for Religious News Service, reports that "the school situation has been normalized" following the three-week "vacation" that coincided with the proclamation of martial law there.

Sister del Rey adds that the Department of Education has issued the following regulations.

— Only enrolled students will be allowed to enter the campus at specified entrance times;

— There will be a curfew time on the campus, to be prescribed by school authorities;

— No visitors for students will be allowed on the campus;

— Parents and guardians, who may be allowed to enter the campus, will have to sign a logbook;

— No publications will be allowed;

— There will be no meetings of clubs;

— Student governments are suspended;

— Classrooms will be used only for academic functions;

— There will be occasional inspection of bags at the gates, in the rooms and of lockers for "undesirable" content.

The "regulations" vitiate the statement about a "normalized" school situation, but that may not be as off-chance as might at first appear. Under the squeeze of censorship, RNS's correspondent could be relying on a sophisticated reading public's recognizing that normalcy can never be defined in terms of abnormal regulations.

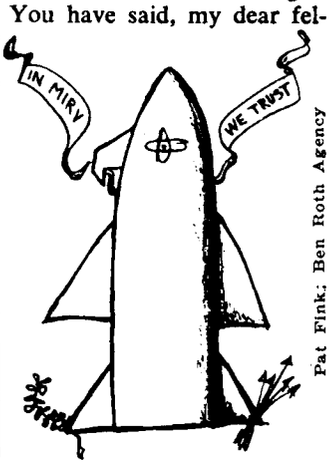
Incidentally, the *New York Times* has taken the unusual action of pinning the following note to the bottom of its news stories from Manila: *Dispatches from the Philippines are subject to official censorship.*

Holmes on Watergate

Henry Brandon, the London *Sunday Times'* correspondent in Washington, checked out the Watergate case, as an alert *Sunday Times* man would, with Sherlock Holmes, who had been brought to Washington for the investigation.

Brandon found Holmes uncertain as to guilty parties and anxious to get back to Baker Street. Brandon's last 'graph:

"Between the moralists, who say that the Republicans are all bad and the cynics who say that it's all happened before in American politics, between the innuendos and the half-truths, I find it confusing to work here," said Holmes. "American politics are dirtier and people more tolerant of dirt than I thought. You have said, my dear fellow, that this would be a great place for me to work because nothing remains for ever secret in Washington. Well, that would tempt me to come back after the elections when the great unobservant public cares again about the finer shades of analysis, but on second thought, I won't because in Washington, to paraphrase Gustave Flaubert's remark to George Sand: *l'homme c'est rien—la politique c'est tout.*"



Pat Fink; Ben Roth Agency

Odds and Ends

—A letter-writer to the *Washington Post* disputes the comparisons being made there between the Administrations of Grant and Harding and that of Nixon. One Joseph J. Post writes:

- The corruption in the Grant and Harding administrations was brought about by incompetence, not by choice.
- Grant and Harding were crushed by the corruption, they did not thrive on it.
- When evidence of the corruption surfaced, Grant, Harding and their Vice Presidents made no attempt to curtail the constitutional right of a free press to report the facts.
- The Grant and Harding debacles were not compounded by the frightening undercurrent of fascism which permeates the present Administration.

—Would you believe? The U.S. military, which keeps endless records on bodies, bombs, sorties, mission drops, interdicted supplies, etc., etc., etc., keeps no records at all on civilian losses. That's what Deputy Assistant Secretary of State William Sullivan told the Senate subcommittee holding hearings on Vietnamese refugees. Hearings-chairman Sen. Kennedy protested and was promised that the Pentagon would be criticized for having accurate data on bombed "trucks and bridges" but none on "schools and hospitals."

JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Strained Optimism

Baton Rouge, La.

To the Editors: Many thanks for your editorial "Doing In Women" [Oct, 6]. Few Catholic publications have seen fit to bother commenting.

I might say however, that you strained rather far in your effort to be optimistic. To get down to practical realities, there are few if any bishops who will take steps which might be interpreted as contrary to the Pope's statement. And many Catholic women who might have been cautiously thinking "uppity" will resign themselves to their "place." For these women it doesn't matter that a "motu proprio" does not carry the authority and binding nature of an encyclical. They know perfectly well that when the Pope speaks it is with an authority unlikely to be ignored by the bishops, regardless of the vehicle.

There is no comparison between this issue and the birth-control issue, in which case couples follow their own conscience. Obviously this is in no way possible in the case of the ministry.

Furthermore there has been a general sympathy for problems of the average person in the church on the part of many clergymen and bishops, but a realignment of thinking toward women is *not* one of them. There is a small spark of interest in increased participation, but participation without a deep-seated change in attitude is like frosting a moldy cake. The Pope's statement is additionally a perfect "out" for any priests or bishops who have been feeling pushed by sisters, laywomen or theologians.

If Sister Mary Luke is right and this is not to become a real setback,

(Continued on page 143)

Commonweal welcomes letters on subjects treated in its pages. Letters of not more than 250 or 300 words naturally have a better chance of being published.

NEWS & VIEWS: 122 **CORRESPONDENCE:** 123
EDITORIALS: 123
OLD SOLDIER JUAN PERON: *Agostino Bono* 124
MARRIAGE, MORALITY AND THE CHURCH: *Eugene Fontinell* 126
COMMENT: *Louis Dupré, Monika Konrad Hellwig, Eugene C. Kennedy, Robert H. Springer, Margaret O'Brien Steinfels, Michael Zeik* 130
VERSE: *Joan McCoy* 135
THE SCREEN: *Colin L. Westerbeck, Jr.* 136
BOOKS: *Cultural Criticism: Left, Right, Center by Saul Maloff* 137; *Reviews: James H. Forest, Mark Taylor* 140

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COMMONWEAL *A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature and the Arts.*
Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y.
Printed in the USA and published weekly,
except biweekly Christmas-New Year's and June to mid-September,
by Commonweal Publishing Co., 232 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10016
MUrray Hill 3-2042. *Copyright © 1972 Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc.*
US and Canada; $14 a year. Foreign $16. Single copies 40¢

WHEN THE SHOOTING STOPS

Now we are told that peace is at hand. Perhaps only an unsettled peace. A half-peace. But peace. At least the bombing, the threat to the dikes, and the heavy shelling of cities will stop. And a weary nation that in the last decade has teetered on the threshold of losing sometimes its sanity and sometimes its soul waits as the negotiators work out the details of the settlement.

Just what the post-cease-fire Vietnam will look like is still not clear; but two things seem reasonably certain. First, the arrangement is principally a two-sided agreement between ourselves and Hanoi, and it will leave Hanoi with many of its war goals either achieved or in sight. Saigon would control the major cities and the coast; Hanoi would dominate Laos and Cambodia, while the Viet Cong plus 145,000 North Vietnamese troops would control about half the South Vietnamese countryside. Although Thieu will remain in office for the time being, once American troops are gone we can expect that the political pressure and guerrilla warfare in which the Viet Cong specialize will begin again. As North Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong said of the impending settlement, "Thieu has been overtaken by events." The Administration is willing to do, to a considerable degree, just what the Nixon rhetoric always said it would not do—"abandon our ally." It was a promise Nixon never should have made and which Thieu should not have believed—but it was a promise. Thus there was some pathetic rightness in President Thieu's reminding Kissinger of Nixon's promises as Kissinger was leaning on the recalcitrant but dependent Thieu—who had only two weeks of rifle ammunition left—to give in.

Second, when George McGovern told the 15,000 people at the University of Iowa that those who opposed the war deserved much of the credit for the peace, he was right.

Americans of several generations who fought through World Wars I and II can still remember the joy of Armistice Day, the delirious crowds of VE and VJ Days, as well as the more drawn-out resolution of the Korean conflict. Yet, while we prayerfully rejoice that the slaughter has stopped, we will be surprised if the end of this war is publicly celebrated. True celebration presumes a people united in a just cause. This cause split the people, and it has not been just. Our only gain is that we have

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halted—perhaps only temporarily—an immoral enterprise we should not have begun.

For many Americans the war was little more than an inconvenience, a stimulus or depressant to the stock market, a distant disturber of the campuses, an abstract political issue, an intellectual or moral concern that became in some academic way the litmus test of one's liberalism. The nation never really mobilized for the longest war in its history. There were no sacrifices equally demanded of all. The draft, for most of the war, resisted reform; and the jungle trails and rice paddies were patrolled not by college boys but by their anonymous brothers from Appalachia and Bedford-Stuyvestant. There were no shortages, no rationing, no blackouts or air raid drills. There was no Sergeant York or Colin Kelly. Vietnam certainly had its saints and heroes; but the only name we all remember sounds like Kelly—and we remember him for something else.

For some Americans the war ended months ago when the draft calls dropped and American deaths fell to a more tolerable level. The fact that in some stages of the war we were killing five hundred civilians a week does not seem to have bothered them.

For many other Americans, Vietnam was the turning point in their moral awareness: for the first time they could not condone their country's policy and still be faithful to their integrity or their God. Some of these were driven into civil disobedience, to prison, or into exile. Now we await a postwar atmosphere that will either intensify their alienation or call them home.

Worst of all, for countless thousands of Americans and North and South Vietnamese and Cambodians and Laotians, the war was simply death. For most of us the casualties have been nameless and faceless—although we saw those young, tanned, yellow and black faces staring at us from the TV screen every night.

As the shooting stops two things will happen: one part of America will begin to push this recent history so far back into its consciousness that we may almost forget what we have done; the other Americans—perhaps only some of those who vigorously opposed the war—will argue to keep the memory of the war alive, convinced that only in this way can we understand the undercurrent of pride and violence in the American character that plummeted us into this unworthy venture. This war was prolonged by the illusion of American omnipotence and the illusion that we were justified in using *any* means to attain our national goals. A true peace cannot be built on the illusion that we have attained those goals with honor.

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ARGENTINE PICTURE

OLD SOLDIER JUAN PERON

Old soldiers never die; but neither do they fade away in the case of Argentina's Juan Domingo Perón. Seventeen years after his violent overthrow, the exiled ex-President is still the most influential political figure in the country. The reason is explained simply by a young worker living in a shantytown in the nation's interior:

"Perón gave more to the workers than any other Argentine President. He gave a sense of consciousness to the working class."

The man speaking is *cabesita negra* (little black-headed one), the group that swept Perón into power in the 1940s. The name comes from the dark hair and complexion of the working class from the interior in comparision to the lighter-skinned oligarchy headquartered in Buenos Aires.

In the early '40s, Perón, then an ambitious colonel, was jailed because of his growing political influence with the lower classes. The *cabesitas negras* organized and marched on Buenos Aires, succeeding in getting the government to release their hero. In the subsequent Presidential election, the *cabesitas negras* elected Perón and for the first time in Argentine history tasted economic and political power.

Perón's government (1946-55) was the first to have labor leaders as cabinet ministers. Numerous jobs were created by developing heavy industry. Workers were organized into strong unions giving them effective pressure groups to defend their interests. Since the overthrow, the working class has seen its power eroded and has regarded the succeeding military and civilian governments as pretenders.

No succeeding government has been able to break this working-class allegiance. Official Peronism is channeled through two organizations: the General Workers Confederation (CGT), the nation's most important labor federation, and the National Justicialist Movement, a political party. Perón directs these organizations from his luxurious exile in Madrid. Estimates of Peronist voter strength go beyond 50%. No one knows exactly, as Peronists have been previously barred as electoral candidates. Despite this prohibition Peronism has continued to grow.

In recent years Peronism has surged beyond the two official organizations to become a genuine movement. The workers and political faithful have been joined by professional people, students, intellectuals and a significant sector of progressive Catholic priests. These groups belong to social sectors which once opposed Perón and

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provided support for his overthrow by the military.

The movement also ranges from guerrillas to people working within the structures and from political rightists to political leftists. Two basic reasons explain these new Peronists:

—Pragmatically, anyone opposed to current government finds the biggest political base in Peronism.

—For the revolutionary-minded, any true grass-roots revolution must be Peronist because the masses are Peronists.

Many of the new Peronists do not place much confidence in the CGT and the Justicialist party citing that they are open to the corruption and infighting characteristic of special-interest groups. The loyalty is to the movement, not the organizations. The difference is explained by a group of progressive priests from the industrial city of Mendoza:

"A political party tries to represent the interests of a certain sector. A movement does not represent. It is the development and struggle of a concrete sector of society."

The wide range of groups within the movement makes it impossible to list the specific aims of Peronism except in the general terms of progress for the lower classes and opposition to government serving the interests of foreign financial empires and the domestic oligarchy.

Interest in the Peronist phenomenon is heightened now as the current military government has promised to hold Presidential elections early next year with Peronists able to run. Theoretically, the way has been paved for Perón's return and possible candidacy. However, many practical obstacles could prevent Perón's return.

Negotiations have degenerated into a personal battle between military President Alejandro Lanusse and Perón. Lanusse was a political prisoner under the Perón regime. Lanusse would like to become the civilian President, but cannot do so effectively unless he comes to terms with Perón and the Peronist sector of the electorate. He is fully aware that the Presidents elected after Perón failed to a large extent because they could not gain Peronist support for their programs.

On the other hand, Perón has little to gain by returning. From Madrid he can continue to be the most important Argentine political figure without having to worry about solving the problems of the country's rapidly deteriorating economic and political situations. (The once stable economy has become heavily inflated. Inflation last year reached 40 percent. It was at 31 percent for the first half of this year. Politically, strong guerrilla bands have developed and the interior of the country has had numerous clashes between soldiers and workers and student groups.)

Perón's age, 76, and his long absence from the country make it highly improbable that he could effectively run the country. Objectively, the biggest value of his return would be the uniting in a political campaign of the divergent forces within Peronism. He would be the symbol of opposition to the ineffective, military government. But by staying in Madrid he could retain the myth surrounding him as the great historical transformer of Argentine society without having to live up to the advance billing.

Another real reason that might keep him away is the sharp antagonism still felt for him by the military and upper classes, the sectors which saw their powers decreased under Perón. Perón created a strong labor movement as a counterbalance to the military, traditional interveners in Argentine politics. Argentina's oligarchy is basically a landholding class deriving its wealth from cattle-raising and agriculture. To create jobs, Perón developed a heavy industry by highly taxing agriculture. This provided the revenues needed to import raw materials for industrial development.

For many, the anti-Peronist feeling is just as strong now as it was in July, 1955 when Perón was overthrown, during his second democratically-elected term of office. During his second term, Perón increased the base of the opposition by becoming demagogic about all criticism and by suppressing many traditional liberties. The opposition came to include the socially-influential Catholic church.

Currently, if the issue of Perón's demagogic past is brought up to a Peronist, it receives an angry reply.

"Foreigners say he was a fascist. But this is a lie used to discredit the benefits he gave us," said one *cabesita negra.*

Whether he comes back or not, Perón continues to be the soldier who refuses to fade away.

AGOSTINO BONO

COMING

JOSEPH CUNNEEN contributes to a new series written to evaluate the effects of Vatican II:

"Ten years ago, responding to *Commonweal*'s request for a pre-Council statement, I indicated a basic skepticism as to whether, despite Pope John's open-ended invitation, the bishops were genuinely interested in hearing my opinions, or those of ordinary laymen in general. Whether on the local, diocesan, or international level, despite the Acts of the Apostles and the history of religious orders, Catholicism was failing to nourish its members with a convincing experience of community. Conciliar encouragement of lay participation in the liturgy, and increasing emphasis on the church as 'the people of God' suggest some theoretical gains, but in 1972 the atomization of the American Catholic population is even further advanced."

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MARRIAGE, MORALITY AND THE CHURCH

EUGENE FONTINELL

Until death do us part?

It is a commonplace to note that since the time of the Protestant Reformation the Roman Catholic Church has tended to be a responder rather than an initiator in the arena of human life. From the high-point of its influence in the Middle Ages when it dominated not only theology and philosophy but also the arts, politics and economics, the Church gradually withdrew to a secure, immovable and unquestionable realm called "faith and morals." Paradoxically, in the 20th century the more creative and dynamic figures within the Roman Catholic community bent their efforts towards increasingly restricting the scope of "faith and morals" so as to allow freedom for Catholics in politics, science, economics and the arts. How often during the 1940 and 1950s did we hear and say that "the Catholic Church is not a monolith."? And how impatient we were with even those well-intentioned non-Catholics who assumed that there was a Catholic position on everything. There was nothing that annoyed us more than to be told that our allegiance to the church excluded the possibility of our being thinking, free human beings. We developed sophisticated and subtle arguments to show that freedom is not absolute and that allegiance to "the truth" was itself the freest act which men could perform. Besides, the number of truths which were absolutely certain and beyond question were very few and hence we had a vast area in which to give vent to our inclinations for inquiry and creativity. We conceded, of course, that since the Renaissance, Catholics had hardly been conspicuously present to the great and humanizing revolutions in science, politics, economics and the like. Nevertheless, there was nothing "in principle" to prohibit Catholics from thinking and so by mid-twentieth century we began to struggle with a range of questions. We were determined to prove that Catholics could traverse the road of thought with the same openness and honesty as other men.

The road, however, has been rockier and more treacherous than any of us imagined. Many of us have learned existentially and painfully what John Dewey saw years before: "If we once start thinking, no one can guarantee where we shall come out, except that many objects, ends and institutions are surely doomed. Every thinker puts some portion of an apparently stable world in peril and no one can wholly predict what will emerge in its place."

Regardless of where one comes down on specific issues, it can hardly be denied that the last ten years have been traumatic for the Roman Catholic community. One is tempted to let things settle a bit before raising any more difficulties. It hardly seems appropriate to further burden a community that in general is still a long way from having assimilated the modest changes of Vatican II. But communities do not exist "in general"; their realities are always constituted by a variety of persons who share some ideas and experiences and not others. Hence, if we must be sensitive to the feelings and fears of those Catholics who are scandalized by many of the changes taking place in the Church, we must also be sensitive to those Catholics who are scandalized by the failure of the Church to be significantly present to the great questions and struggles of our time.

Whether or not one is in complete or even partial sympathy with that small but persistent group of Catholics who have dramatically protested the Vietnam war, they have delivered a severe blow to the aforementioned

EUGENE FONTINELL *is the author of* Toward A Reconstruction of Religion: A Philosophical Probe *(Doubleday).*

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cliché about the Catholic monolith. What thousands of books and arguments had failed to do, they have accomplished in a few years by their manner of living and acting.

It is not only in the area of war protest, however, that some Catholics are living and acting in a manner which clashes with the conventonal wisdom of what it is to be a Roman Catholic. It is at most the "tip of the iceberg" but I believe there is emerging a review of marriage and human sexuality on the part of some Catholics which, whatever the outcome, cannot but shake the Catholic community to its very foundations.

It is because I believe that any healthy community needs the fullest airing of even the most threatening ideas that I agreed to accept the invitation of the Editors of *Commonweal* to present my impressions and reflections on marriage as it is being lived and discussed by Catholics. I stress the phrase "impressions and reflections" for I make no claim to having conducted a nationwide survey of the attitude of Catholics towards marriage. Further, in presenting what I hope are reflective suggestions. I do not feel bound to have resolved the many difficulties which attach to these suggestions. The only credentials I can offer, therefore, are those of one who has participated in his share of living-room and conference discussions and who for some years has been attempting to formulate a few working hypotheses which might enable some people (in particular myself) to continue as believing Catholics in the face of many formidable obstacles.

What then is one hearing about marriage along the "Catholic circuit"? Not too surprisingly, very much what one is hearing along any other circuit. To begin with, the question of divorce is effectively settled. Here there is clearly the widest consensus—to such an extent that that it is not even discussed any longer. It would seem that even in more traditional circles divorce is hardly looked upon as an evil. And, of course, we already have the first efforts on the part of theologians which will eventually result in showing that divorce is not really condemned by the Gospels. Long before this becomes established in official circles, however, divorce will be viewed as an acceptable possibility by and for most Catholics.

The more biting question and the one with the most far-reaching implications has to do with whether a sustained relationship between a man and woman demands sexual exclusivity. Here there is more talking than acting but there is some acting and it is likely to increase. Of course, to even raise this question is, for many Catholics, a sign that one is no longer thinking as a Catholic. It may be that there is absolutely no possibility of being a Catholic unless one accepts the traditional sexual code, but surely the history of the Catholic attitude toward contraception should serve as a caution against such closed certainties.

Less than fifteen years ago you could hardly find a Catholic thinker, however liberal, who would even privately defend contraception except as some kind of "lesser evil." In the early 1950s the question seldom came up—it was universally agreed by Catholics that this was one of those "few" absolutely settled questions. Even when the arguments prohibiting contraception began to collapse(as they did for me in the late 1950s) we were still lacking a rationale whereby we could defend being Catholics while rejecting the official position on contraception. For example, it was not until 1964 that I was able to put into print my views defending the right of Catholics to use contraceptives. As so often happens, a number of Catholics published their dissenting views at about the same time, the first of them being Louis Dupré's article in *Cross Currents*.

Even at that time, however, only a few Catholics were willing to go on record in opposition to the traditional view. Yet when *Humanae Vitae* appeared in 1968 it was strongly and publicly criticized by Catholic thinkers throughout the world. Today, what a short time ago was unthinkable for Catholics is now not only thinkable but being practiced by a large number of Catholics. And practiced, it should be noted, without the doubts and anguish which beset those Catholics years ago who dared use contraceptives.

I am not for a moment, of course, suggesting that the shift in the attitude toward contraception will *necessarily* be paralleled by an equally radical shift in the attitude of Catholics toward marriage. I am strongly urging, however, that we not exclude at least thinking about the possibility that marriage as we have traditionally understood it is finished, even for Catholics. More important, however, is the implication of the contraceptive shift for the entire realm of morality. It is my judgment that Catholics in the past tied up marital morality with contraceptive morality. It is because Pope Paul cannot see how he can surrender the traditional view on contraception without jeopardizing the traditional view on marriage and the authority of the Church in morality that he remains wedded to a position that has long since been lost. In holding this view, Paul has both a perception and a consistency that is absent in many more liberal Catholics. What is at stake is nothing less than the privileged competency of the Church in the realm of morality. In my opinion, this competency, as traditionally claimed, is at an end. This is, needless to say, a rather large assertion and I cannot hope to do more than briefly indicate why I think it is at an end and what new direction we might take.

What I wish to suggest is that the Church may have a mission which is not inseparably bound-up with a *specific* political morality, economic morality or sexual morality. Suppose we were to view the Church as an evolving community whose continuity is maintained by a continuing faith-encounter with that radical mystery

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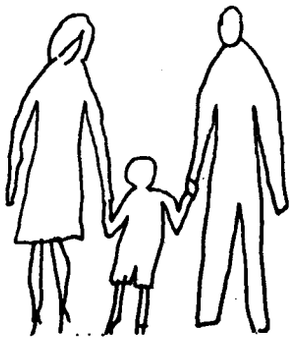
whom we have named God. Now at any particular moment this community will attempt to articulate this mystery-experience in terms of ideas, doctrines, symbols and institutions. While the life of this community will always involve a complex of such realities, it will not be absolutely identified with any of these. Such a developing community, therefore, allows for the greatest possible openness since it can at any moment surrender the particular forms of its life without surrendering its life.

These are, I know, "hard words" for most Roman Catholics and indeed for most Christians—yet they must be considered. I believe that nothing is more crucial for the continued life of the Church than that we create a new image of it—one which will enable it to move away from its defensive stance. For several hundred years the Church has been fighting a holding-action at best and a losing-action at worst. Again and again it has defended unworthy causes and opposed worthy ones long after these causes have been respectively rejected or accepted by the larger community. Of



course, after the dust of battle had settled we did not lack our theorists who would "prove" that science, democracy and assorted kinds of freedom were not only compatible with, but rooted in, the Christian vision.

I do not wish to suggest that the Church in the past several hundred years has done nothing worthwhile. Though I am not convinced of it myself, I think a case can be made that it was a healthy corrective to some of the excesses which accompanied the various modern revolutions. Even if this were so, I would still argue that this phase in the life of the Church must come to an end. It can no longer rest content with the safe role of conserver while it leaves the risky role of creator to other men.

Let me try to concretize these generalities a bit with specific reference to the Church's role in morality and the institution of marriage. Despite many efforts to widen the understanding of morality, it is only with reference to man's sexual and reproductive life that there is a clearly identifiable Catholic code of morality. It is true that many Catholics have acted and spoken out on the morality of race relations, war and peace, economic systems and the like, but it is almost impossible to differentiate such thought and action from that of other reflective and concerned men and women.

The Church has gradually surrendered its claims to have precise prescriptions for human actions in man's intellectual, artistic, political, economic and social activities. While these surrenders have been necessary, they have had some most unfortunate consequences. The most crucial one is that many both within and without the Church have increasingly come to view these activities as outside morality. A by-product of this consequence is the failure of Catholics to be present in an effective sense in some of the most formative areas of human life.

Surely there must be at least as much morality attached to war and peace, race relations and economics as there is to man's sexual life. I would like to stress that I am not suggesting that the Church should have no concern for man's sexual life but that it must manifest this concern in a radically different fashion. By the same token it must also have a concern for every other aspect of man's moral life whether political, social or economic. What is the transformation I am suggesting? Negatively, it is an acknowledgement that the Church has no precise code for human living in *any* sphere of human life. Positively, the Church would understand its mission as one of attempting to keep men aware of the rich creative possibilities of human life while simultaneously warning him against turning in upon himself and closing himself off from that mysterious source of life called God.

I am, of course, asking for a blending of the great traditional theistic religious insight and the great modern humanistic insight. I do not believe that either of these can continue to stand by itself. The first, God-belief, when isolated tends to make God a remote and existentially irrelevant being. The second, assertion of human autonomy, is prey to the incursion of the demonic and the emergence in man of the illusion that he is free to act without limit or responsibility.

To express my view another way, I would like to see us substitute the notion of responsibility *before* God for that of responsibility *to* God. Admittedly the second is the more traditional and dominant one in the history of Christianity. God is viewed as having given man a set of commandments and man discharges his responsibility by carrying them out. There is no need to deny this historical fact nor to underestimate the tremendous contribution to the humanizing of life made by this view. Unless, however, we are committed *a priori* to this early understanding of the Church *vis à vis* God, we ought to consider one which might have greater possibilities.

The chief merit of believing that we are responsible *before* God is that God ceases to be a tyrannical master and we cease to be passive slaves. We can continue to believe that we are "called" by God to share in the exciting though risky process of redemptive creativity.

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What we cannot do is ask God to do our work for us or transfer our responsibility to him. We will no longer claim to speak for God but begin speaking and acting for ourselves—believing all the while that we do so in the presence of God. We must, then, create values, institutions and symbols which enable us to live more fully. We now know, however, that such creative activity is an ongoing task both individually and collectively. To say this is not to deny that there have been significant human achievements. We can, for example, believe that men have gained some insights into the direction in which they should move. These insights, however, can never be labeled "absolute values" which, once discovered, are then locked in a vault with a warning attached: "Do not reconsider nor reevaluate the consequences of living according to the enclosed."

More Not Less Involvement

As I indicated above, what I believe is needed is more not less involvement on the part of all Catholics in the developing moral life of the human community. I would suggest that nothing has tended to limit such involvement more than the belief on the part of the Pope, bishops, clergy and many of the laity that when they speak on moral issues it is God speaking through them. What a terrifying burden to place on anyone! Is it any wonder that most often the Catholic's role in the human struggle has been either passive spectator or arrogant pontificator? Why cannot a Pope, a bishop, a layman, a local church reflect upon an issue and present to the human community its witness while listening to the witness of other communities or individuals? Why cannot we manifest in our words and our actions the cumulative experience of the Church without claiming for this experience some magical input from God? Of course, to act in such a manner would involve giving up the certainty and security that has characterized an earlier moment in the life of the Church. But what is faith for if not to enable men to live creatively in the absence of certainty and security?

It must also be admitted that the unanimity on moral questions which has so long been viewed as the identifying mark of Roman Catholics will also disappear. This, I submit, may not be a loss but a decided gain. Suppose, for example, that early in the Vietnam war every bishop, parish and individual Catholic felt obligated to take a stand on the moral implications of this action. Surely some, perhaps in the beginning even most, would have defended our presence in Vietnam. But if the witness of each was given with love and openness to the witness of others is it not likely that the result would have been a more serious and significant involvement of the Church in this tragic situation?

War and peace is one thing, however, but sex is something else again. While the Church seems to have been able to live with a degree of vagueness, ambiguity, division and uncertainty in reference to war, it has never wavered in its claims of unequivocal certainty concerning marriage and man's sexual life. I think we should be brutally honest here—when Catholics argue about marriage they are arguing about sex. It is true that in recent years Catholic writers have tried to stress the personalistic aspects of marriage, to describe it as more encompassing than sexual intercourse, but when the chips are down the clear and unambiguous rules governing man's sexual activity remain essentially unchanged.

For many Catholics, consciously or unconsciously, the chief purpose of mariage is that it is the means whereby we keep man's sexual proclivities within bounds. Nowhere has the Church more lacked confidence in man's ability to form his life responsibly than in the area of sexual activity. There hovers over Catholics the fear that unless men are restrained by divine decrees, they will become wild uncontrollable hedonists. I am not sentimentally suggesting that all men, when freed from traditional codes, will exercise their sexuality in a positive and humanizing fashion. Nor am I simplistically asserting that the traditional view of marriage is fundamentally anti-life and devoid of any redeeming features. What I am saying, however, is that whatever is of worth in the traditional institution of marriage must now make its way on the basis of its experiential fruits. Further, Catholics must join with other men in an effort to forge modes of responsible sexual activity.

If Catholics are to join in this common struggle in good faith, they cannot claim to know with absolute certainty what the outcome will be. They can and indeed must bring to this search their own vision, insights and experience but they cannot ask that these receive a privileged treatment. If Catholics wish to be heard with an open-mind, then they must listen with an open-mind. Hence, at least as a possibility, Catholics must be open to a way or ways of maintaining such values as love, concern, responsibility and personal affection without excluding a multiplicity of sexual relations. Indeed, some would suggest that only a sustained relationship which is not sexually exclusive holds out any hope against either a static monogamy or a dehumanizing promiscuity.

On the other hand, if, as many believe, sexual activity is to be confined to a man and a woman within a certain contractual situation, then those who so believe must have the courage to assert this and live by it.

There is nothing in the suggestions which I have advanced which excludes *a priori* that a permanent and exclusive relationship offers the most possibilities for human development and fulfillment. There is no question that the creation of such a relationship will involve effort and sacrifice but if such effort and sacrifice can be made only out of fear or under the alleged "dictate

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of God," then this kind of relationship will become the refuge of the timid and the weak.

In sum, what I am proposing is that Catholics just like all other men must be willing to defend their institutions and life styles on the basis of the fruits they bring forth rather than on an alleged special pipeline to God's mind. But even more important, I am questioning the inseparability of the mission of the Church from a particular mode of marriage or sexual code. It might seem that I am robbing the Church of its last existential anchor in human life. Politics, science, economics, the arts—all of these institutions and activities must be undertaken by men without the benefit of specific directions from the Church. And now I am adding to these the institution of marriage and the activity of human sexuality. What then is left for the Church to do? That is precisely what I think we must find out but to find out we must have the courage to admit that what were once necessary and helpful roles for the Church have ceased to be so. There have gradually emerged in the history of human development others who can play these roles better. But surely there is still need for some segment or segments of the human community to take as their task the keeping alive in men a consciousness of and participation in that encompassing reality which is ever intimately present to all particular human activities while being simultaneously beyond them. If there were not a Church to undertake such a task, then we would have to invent one—perhaps that is what Christ is doing.

COMMENT/COMMENT/COMMENT/COMMENT/CO

LOUIS DUPRE

Let's not pervert Christianity

PROFESSOR FONTINELL raises some fundamental questions which sooner or later we shall all have to answer. That marriage as we have traditionally understood it is in for basic changes or alternatives appears to be almost certain. This raises grave moral issues which cannot simply be solved by an outright acceptance or rejection. Mr. Fontinell is right in calling for more involvement of Catholics in the developing moral life of the human community. Yet since my comments have presumably been invited to stimulate discussion rather than to voice agreement, let me point out what may require further reflection. Mr. Fontinell does not always clearly distinguish between principle and fact—and this is somewhat unsettling in a discussion of principles. It baffled me to read: "The question of divorce is effectively settled. Here there is clearly the widest consensus to such an extent that it is not even discussed any longer." "Effectively settled," by whom? By the marital customs of New York City? But is that a sufficient basis for a radical change in principle? The Christian principles were first stated in a moral environment which they opposed on almost every single point. If by divorce Mr. Fontinell means divorce and remarriage (mere divorce as a full legal separation has never been an issue of principle), then I believe the matter to be far from settled. Not only has the Church so far made no concessions of principle. But to me at least it appears to be dubious to what extent she ought to make them. I myself have argued tentatively that a definitive breach of the marriage contract by one of the partners (e.g., by desertion) should perhaps restore the other party's freedom to marry (*The Bond of Marriage,* ed. William Bassett, Notre Dame Press, 1968, pp. 181-204). But I find no evident support in the Christian tradition or in the requirements of modern life for universalizing such a right to divorce and remarriage.

In general I find Mr. Fontinell rather vague in his projections for the Christian marriage of the future. How am I to understand the following statement presented as a source of further investigation: "Some would suggest that only a sustained relationship which is not sexually exclusive holds any hope against either a static monogamy or dehumanizing promiscuity." That sexually exclusive monogamy must be "static" is such a gratuitous assumption that I do not see why a dilemma based on it should deserve further reflection. This leads me to the most intriguing proposition of all in Mr. Fontinell's article: "Catholics must join with other men in an effort to forge modes of responsible sexual activity." I do not believe that Catholics have been lagging too far behind other men in sexual activity. Most of the populations of France, Italy, Spain and Latin America are Catholic and their sexual activities are, on the whole, satisfactory, though perhaps somewhat exaggerated by Anglo-Saxon standards. Nor have those Catholics failed to forge "responsible" modes for channeling their abundant activity. But the question is: Are sexual relations other than the ones traditionally regarded as acceptable to Christians nevertheless compatible with *the spirit of the Gospel?* On that basis, I think any non-exclusive marital relation would have to be ruled out from the start. I do not mean that marriages which are not sexually exclusive display a fundamental moral depravity, or that

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Catholics must publicly oppose them, but only that unions so obviously conflicting with the letter and the spirit of the New Testament can in no way claim to be "Christian." If a Christian wants to indulge in them, he is merely doing what Christians have been doing at all times. But what in modern life should entitle him to justify in principle what previously was tolerated only in practice? The greater sexual freedom of our time? That would rather seem to demand a more ascetic attitude on the part of the Christian. To state the matter bluntly: Why should our generation of Christians be the first to have its cake and eat it? If we want to follow the mores of our day, let us do so with all due enthusiasm, but let us not pervert Christianity for the pleasant but fictional idea of having it on our side. It is perhaps because the Church tries to be on everyone's side today that it cuts such a strange figure in our world.

Those critical remarks do not dispense us from heeding Mr. Fontinell's call for "the greatest possible openness" in our confrontation with new modes of behavior. Their purpose is merely to discern what is negotiable from what is not negotiable in the Christian life style.

MONIKA KONRAD HELLWIG

A context I find unreal

SEVERAL AREAS of ambiguity in Eugene Fontinell's statement trouble me. He speaks of the mission of the Church in relation to Christian marriages as though this is identical with hierarchic exercise of legislative, executive and judicial power over particular marriages. With this assumption we either have the celibate hierarchy dictate our family affairs or we are left on our own to meet all men "in an effort to forge modes of responsible sexual activity" with an open mind towards a multiplicity of (simultaneous?) sexual relations. He expresses the same focus another way when he says that "what is at stake is . . . the privileged competency of the Church in the realm of morality" and links this with the specificity of the Church's moral teaching.

We need to distinguish between the struggle of the whole community of believers of twenty centuries (to live out the implications of the death and resurrection of Jesus until his glorification in the final coming of the Kingdom) on the one hand, and particular normative formulations in words and institutions that have crystallized out of that struggle from time to time on the other hand. A particular formulation may cease to have value, but the accumulated experience of the community can not lose its value as a frame of reference.

We also need to distinguish between the concern of the Church to keep alive an ideal and give every support for its realization concretely on the one hand, and the assumption of the role of judge and policeman over individual cases on the other. To question the relevance to the Christian endeavor of hierarchic supervision and juridical enforcement with institutional sanctions, is not equivalent to questioning the relevance of the believing community's struggle to project the specifics of its ideal.

In that struggle there can not be a common effort with *all* men or with men in general "to forge modes of responsible sexual activity" but only with those who seriously share a common eschatology, simply because responsibility is always relative to goals. It is this that troubles me most about Fontinell's statement. Apart from a casual reference to the "Christian vision" and a final clause difficult to interpret in its context, there is no reference to the event of Jesus and our claim that he is the Christ. The problematic is presented in a context which as a Christian I find unreal, and in which as a theologian I have no basis for discussion.

Personally, I favor an approach which would go far beyond the recent statement of the CTSA's Committee on the Problem of Second Marriage, but which takes a different direction from Fontinell's. Life to me as a Christian, makes sense in the light of Jesus as the Christ, as the event of his presence is mediated to me by the community of his followers. Goals, values and perspectives are constantly sliding into adjusted focus as I try to collaborate with serious followers of Jesus in bringing about the yet unrealized implications of his preaching and death. One value that stands beyond questioning is fidelity in personal relationships to the point of folly, and trust and forgiveness to the point where there is a creative leap beyond the bounds of the possible into the radically new.

In relation to marriages this means that the community proposes the apparently impossible and by its manner of living makes it possible. This manner of living necessarily includes abstention from all sanctions and juridical process (which are the negation of trust and forgiveness) and from all internal judgments on the good faith and sincerity of another. This manner of living means that a broken marriage or an equivocal relationship is always seen as a misfortune but never judged concretely as a sin, and therefore always calls for more than ordinary efforts to draw those involved into the creative warmth of the community.

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EUGENE C. KENNEDY

Fidelity remains vital

I WOULD LIKE to take exception to Professor Fontinell's essay on several grounds: His focus on a liberated sexuality within marriage as a likely step forward in what he describes as Catholicism's anguished passage into modern times merely repeats in another way the restrictive emphasis of which he has found the Church itself guilty. The problems of marriage, moral life and the Church's painful struggle to end its schism with the world are far more complicated than this emphasis would suggest. Underscoring this currently popular theme makes it more rather than less difficult to discuss marriage in the proper context of human moral growth. The equation which Professor Fontinell laments—Church morality on marriage equals restriction on sex—he has merely rewritten: new morality in marriage equals expansion of sex. Both statements concern disintegrated sexuality and impovers our attempts to understand marriage as a profound religious experience in which the sharing of man and woman includes but is not summed up in sex.

To propose non-exclusive sexuality as perhaps the only development which "holds out any hope against either a static monogamy or a dehumanizing promiscuity" is to present a familiar form of romantic redemption. We have, in fact, had premarital and co-marital sex for nearly as long as man can remember with less than spectacular results in deepening the relational values that gives significance to human life. What we have not grasped nearly enough are the distinctive qualities of human exchange which give meaning to sexual experience. When we fail to place marriage in the context of our more generalized efforts to become human we emphasize sex in a naive and sentimental way. It is not easy for man to integrate sex into his personality; he can only accomplish this if he understands some of the broader issues connected with the unique commitment that we almost pitifully vulnerable human beings make when we draw close to each other in friendship and marriage. It is the foundation and atmosphere of trust and concern, the repeated cycle of dying and rising in order to grow together that we must understand in order to see sex in perspective and to speak with any deep and moral sensitivity about marriage.

It is also clear that man and woman do not seek merely for expanded sexual experience in their insistent efforts to achieve successful intimacy with each other. Genital sex is only one aspect of this intimacy even as it is only on aspect of sexuality itself. The institution of marriage is under strain not because people reduce it to sexuality but because they realize that it means a great deal more than this. Human beings want to stand close to each other unafraid on the sacred ground of intimacy, knowing and being known, tasting experientially the mystery of salvation which touches man here in a special way. We cannot barter our way into successful intimacy by multiplying sexual contacts. We can only find our way by achieving a reasonable sense of our own identity and, as Erik Erikson has noted, by learning the meaning of fidelity. A free-ranging sex life is a perennial adolescent dream; it is more immature than sinful by anybody's measure. To ignore the far harder and more important questions of what it means to come to terms with oneself in order to have something to give to another is to miss the meaning of marriage completely. Fidelity is hardly fashionable these days and yet it remains a vital part of an adult life. The question of commitment, no matter how complex this may be for a generation becoming more aware of its motives, remains a serious question that is indistinguishable in its human religious aspects. What we do to and with each other is never merely casual. They are always part of the web of experiences by which we define ourselves to each other and through which we make a lasting statement about our moral convictions.

Finally, Professor Fontinell, while criticizing the administrative Church for being out of touch with brave and creative thinkers, does not listen to the many serious artists, writers and other social observers whose very words and works almost ache with a concern for a rediscovery of the deeper values of faith, hope and love through which man understands and becomes himself. Most surprising still is Professor Fontinell's neglect to deal with the essentially religious experience of a Church which is dying to older forms of understanding itself while it is buoyed up by faith that it will rise to a new and more sensitive incarnation of service. The Church's struggles with questions of human sexuality are only part of its flawed and halting working out of its own destiny. We probably need a declaration of fallibility in order to recapture a sense of realism about the Church's efforts to re-establish contact with human experience. The world definitely needs a revitalized Church that can be more true to itself and standing with man in the whole array of painful struggles which confront him in his hopes to become more human. But both the Church and individual men and women who are trying to plumb the meaning of love are caught up in the transcendent mystery, the meaning of which can only be grasped by faith. For most people marriage is the essential religious experience of their lives and, if the Church is just beginning to appreciate this again, it should remind us of the imperfect pilgrimage we share in life that is caught up in the mystery of Jesus. If we believe in anything, we must not separate the development of the new morality of marriage from the development of a richer understanding of the true nature of the Church.

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ROBERT H. SPRINGER

The necessity of ambiguity

WHEN THE editors of *Commonweal* offered me the chance to comment on an article by Eugene Fontinell I accepted sight unseen. Familiar with Dr. Fontinell's stature as a process philosopher I expected his manuscript to be a challenging one. I was aware, too, that he had authored one of the enduring pieces in the spate of writing on contraception in the early 60's in *What Modern Catholics Think About Birth Control* (edited by William Birmingham). Fontinell's contribution was entitled "Contraception and the Ethics of Relationships." Looking beyond the purely biological to the person as constitutively relational he put the focus where it belonged and suggested further ethical development subsequently found viable. Relationship is central to an ethic of sexuality.

He concluded his piece with the words: ". . . to impose on a couple a judgment that goes so radically contrary to their experience, their reason, and their sense of responsibility, while insisting that this judgment is a dictate of reason, is to equate proper submission to the authority of the Church with the surrender of the core of one's human dignity." That was going to the heart of the matter of contraception. Before condemning his present article one would do well to read again this prior one.

My expectation of challenge was not disappointed. The traditional Catholic view of divorce, sexual exclusivity, marriage and the privileged competency of the Church in the realm of morality are finished, he tells us. Presumably these conclusions are reached not just from after Sunday liturgy coffee conversations but from the eminence of the philosopher steeped in the wisdom of process that underlies all human existence. They are also spoken by a Catholic loyal to his Church and conservative of its authority.

First, on the sheer level of fact, Catholics have, and are, abandoning the old view of monogamy: i.e., divorce and remarriage are more accepted. Sex exclusively within marriage, and in marriage with only one person, is being questioned. Much more importantly the whole moral teaching authority of the official Church is threatened by the failure of the older contraceptive position to hold exclusive sway in the Catholic community. When you teach eternal damnation for a certain practice, then do an about-face (contraception need not deprive Catholics of the sacraments, as even official teaching holds) you have severely damaged authority with the constituency.

This is why some of us from all ranks in the Church, Fontinell included, tried to head off *Humanae Vitae*. For the same reason we begged our American bishops not to publish the recently promulgated "Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Facilities." Such reaffirmations of older decisions, acknowledged by Catholics competent in medicine and morals as needing basic revision, render authority out of touch with reality, even subject to disrespect.

I cannot agree more with Fontinell's basic doctrinal view. "Responsibility before God" and sharing "in the exciting though risky process of redemptive creativity" warm the cockles of my moral being. I can even strike my breast when he laments that some in all ranks of the Church have been guilty of pontificating, hierarchy, laity and clergy. I accept, at least intellectually, the necessity of living with ambiguity in place of the old certainties.

Coming to Fontinell's most fundamental questioning, "the inseparability of the mission of the Church from a particular mode of marriage or sexual code," I agree that we have had too much of the code variety of moral teaching, as the renewal of moral theology has reiterated in recent years. The biblical message of faith and love is not reducible to code prescriptions. Much less can there be one code for all Catholics. We cannot prescribe a single position on Black separatism, party affiliation or contraception. I do want the official Church, however, to teach that love of the neighbor means promoting community health services, that cooperation in the lettuce boycott is social justice. I want to hear our bishops condemn the escalatin of the American air war in Indochina.

If this means that to be consistent with my ethical theory of social issues I must be open to other forms of marriage, to other sexual expressions of love than were allowed in the past —and it does—then I will be consistent. I sustain the competency of the official Church in morality. It must, however, reflect the whole Church, or that part of it that is competent to judge the particular issue.

MARGARET O'BRIEN STEINFELS

Betrayal and abandonment

EUGENE FONTINELL states his case so modestly, so tentatively, that in the end he seems downright elusive. In this age of frank talk his main prescription borders on old-fashioned coyness: ". . . At least as a possibility, Catholics must be open to a way or ways of maintaining such values as love, concern, responsibility and personal affection without excluding a multiplicity of sexual relations." Civilized adultery? Spouse-swapping? Extra-marital affairs? Pre-marital sex? Is there a special Catholic insight and presence to be brought to such matters? Professor Fontinell ought to

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spell out the details. Or must we leave that to Woody Allen?

But it is the concept of "being open" that Fontinell, the philosopher, ought to have clarified. Most of us are now so open we can hardly stop the slightest breeze. Is he simply asking that we do not shun those who enjoy "a multiplicity of sexual relations"; if we did, no university could hold a faculty meeting, and probably none of us could complete the weekly shopping. Or does he have something more complicated in mind? That we share the pill with our teen-aged daughter and hope that the mother of our son's girl friend generously does the same? That we be charitable toward our neighbor who has a different bed-partner every weekend and invariably sends her to borrow a cup of sugar? That we extend sympathy over the latest divorce? That we rejoice in a homosexual marriage? That high school sex education courses add practical lab sessions with techniques by Masters and Johnson? That we understand the incestuous relationship of mother and son down the street? That Catholics having failed to influence the course of past revolutions ought to be in the forefront of the sexual one?

Instead of forthright proposals we are offered an implicit forecast of how the "Catholics and Sex" debate might go. Fontinell recounts the history of the debate over contraception (the debate over democracy, or the right to read André Gide are equally apt) which coincidentally, though not necessarily, might serve as a model for the coming debate over monogamy and sexual exclusivity. The force of this logic would send monogamy and sexual exclusivity the way of monarchy, rhythm and the Index of Prohibited Books.

Fontinell argues that the Church has ceased to issue specific directives in art, philosophy, economics, and politics. Why should it continue to do so about sex? Let us grant his point. But the Church having given up a detailed sexual ethic might still be expected to speak of sexual matters, just as having given up doctrinaire views on politics it should, nonetheless, speak out (we hope) against a Hitler, racial apartheid, or the bombing of Vietnam. The Church, however, does not loom so large in my perspective as in Professor Fontinell's. Finally, the question is: Can there be a total and life-long commitment by one person to another? Marriage is not, after all, a promise to Church, Pope, Society or Absolute Morality, but to another human person. What is it to Church, Pope, or Absolute Morality if one should renounce marital fidelity? A new tic over the left eye. But to another human person, no matter how delicately put and civilly carried out, it is betrayal and abandonment. Ultimately, it is not, and never has been, the monolith, or the existence of a Church, or the existence of God, that depends on our desire to persist and grow in love, but ourselves.

MICHAEL ZEIK

Twilight of the gonads

EUGENE FONTINELL is an intellectual, deeply committed to the human concerns of the 20th century, yet one for whom God (and therefore, the Community of Believers) continues to be a reality. He tries to make sense of these realities and concerns in the midst of the kaleidoscopic value-dispersion of our era. Such men are extremely important in the life of the Church. We need thousands like him.

His vision is not my vision; but—more important—let the visions continue to pour out. Let the Spirit (and the sociologists) test them. As a historian of religion I know that there cannot be a *living* church unless it grows. Growth (biological, psychological, or spiritual) of necessity involves death and resurrection.

Certainly we are well advised to be admonished against *unexamined* absolutes and *inseparable* ties to specific codes. Example: were there no room for growth and development, even in morals, we would still be burdened with the many wives and concubines of an Abraham, father of monotheists; or a David, of whom Jesus is named son. We might not even have attained to the economic pinnacle of corporate capitalism, had the Church too tightly held on to her medieval doctrines against usury.

On the other hand, the single most unquoted statement of the Gospel, and my favorite for the times in which we live, is this: "He who would be a scribe in the Kingdom must know how to bring forth both old things and new." I don't find the balance in Fontinell.

Perhaps it is because of my Jewish background that I would have no difficulty producing instantaneously a list of 237 absolutes—even specific absolutes—that I would like to see the Church and the whole human race embrace forever. Let me give you just the first three: 1—Don't gas and cremate innocent men. 2—Don't gang-rape their wives and daughters. 3—Don't stick hoses up their rectums and turn on 100 pounds of water pressure. Is the code specific enough? Isn't our complaint against Pius XII that he refrained from "specifics" during the Nazi era? What is the relation between "specifics" and prophecy?

To continue the point. Do we want the future Church faced once again with the possibility of genocide, to "understand its mission as one of attempting to keep men aware of the rich creative possibilities of human life while simultaneously warning him against turning in upon himself and closing himself off from that mysterious source of life called God?" The prose is good, but can you see the Storm Troopers worrying about "turning in on themselves and closing themselves off from the mysterious source of life?"

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A lot of the differences between Fontinell and myself have got to be semantic. We couldn't possibly disagree on these things. Spell it out more, Gene. "Specifics" are incarnational. The tension between the absolute principle and the relative application is a necessary and life-giving tension. The avoidance of life-tensions is death. You can't just want the Community of Jesus to tell the world, "Love, and do what you will." Not because it isn't true. It is true. But it's insufficient. The Storm Troopers do not love, and we all have a bit of the Storm Trooper in us.

I want to say specifically about the divorce issue, that I cannot casually transfer the infallibility thing from the Pope (where it has caused much trouble) to the Gallup Poll (where it will cause even more). If there are now 455 divorces for every thousand marriages performed, I don't see the question as "effectively settled"; I see a lot of bleeding children.

Nor do I want all thinking about divorce to stop. Present teaching does not satisfy me either. The question is not ripe. This is not a time for polls, but a time for work, for hard thinking. Is mere "biological" consummation true sacramental consummation? How many marriages are not marriages at all and never were?

On sex. No space for theory—here's my gut reaction. My eyes see, and my ears hear: too many of the new "meaningful relationships" are initiated by middle-aged men with much younger women. What is there about sagging breasts that terminates "meaningful relationships"?

There *are* problems. Monogamy demands painful renunciation while it bestows the gift of rock-bottom human trust. Did Christ promise roses?

My eyes see and my ears hear that much of the new speculation in moral theology is a mere middle-age projection of the twilight of the gonads. I agree with the proposition that there is no real Christianity that is not humanistic. But you don't even get humanism when you preclude suffering. What you get is an old, old thing they now call "self-development." Neither Fontinell nor I have solved the problem. Let's *work* on it.

My vision: the Church (Fontinell, *Commonweal*, the theologians and the faithful—not the Pope alone) hangs in. There's enough moral abdication in the world as it is. God does speak through this Church, but not, in every case, *irrevocably*. New times demand new applications. Our brains are his providence. One valid form of revelation is "problem-solving in history!"

JOAN MC COY

FARM VISITOR

In the barnyard the cows bark in genuine
Disgust, as among the rotation of their tails
I pick for hens eggs. The Bishop of morning
Flaps. Earlier, in the genuflection
Of his voice, the sun fled upward,
And I lay appalled among the bedsheets.

But I came, farmward and innocent, my teeth
Clanging like the breakfast bell, and my skirts
Leaping in gusts of good intention. Trotted out
Of my nightcap, among milkers and catcries,
Bending to the warm hay,
I crack the live and edible
To its fist of china and sac of pale jelly.

Such innocence! The yard hoots in dismay
And I come skinless and clawing, in wet
Yellow, stuck to my grief, its thick sun cut
Loose on my fingers, shaking in hay and lost
Grace. Like furious mothers
The cows come, and Chagall's hens, riding
The fierce air, upside-down
And tilting from backbones, the angular
Cows hips hurling them, revenge
At my upturned face.

How I wish
For some abstract grace,
A clean cloth, water; an absolution
Of childhood, where I stepped like light
Through light, in perfect reverence; left
All things intact, in shells or not.
Now in this offering of feathers I fly
To my knees and certainly my place: home,
Cracked and mad-hearted, in this world
Of chickens, and the immense laity
Of the cruel:
unwitting, or adult
The sun bites inward and goes out.
The incredulous Bishop moves on.

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THE SCREEN

Nothing could be less deserved than Federico Fellini's reputation as a decadent. It's the sort of reputation that is encouraged by the publicists and publicans of the movie business because they know it sells films these days. For instance, the new film, *Fellini's Roma*, is billed as a chronicle of "the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, 1931-1972." But like Fellini's other recent films, *Satyricon* and *The Clowns*, the new film doesn't take human excess seriously enough to be decadent. Fellini sees so clearly the durability of human folly and is so aware of the rejuvenizing energy in life that he never lives up to his reputation. Decadents always like to feel there is an apocalypse at hand so that they may be cynically indifferent to it. In Fellini's films a degree of madness that ought to destroy the human race is fondly tolerated as part of life's ongoing process.

For the most part the new film is informed by the wry combination of memory and observation that is characteristic of Fellini's past films. This film is half-autobiographical, half-documentary. Beginning in his own youth, when he knew Rome in legend only, Fellini introduces us to the city—to the plebeian street cafes and prewar vaudeville theaters—as he himself was introduced. And in addition to these recreations of Rome done from memory, he offers us a sketchy portrait of Rome today. The only thing that holds it all together is the unmistakable Fellini style. This is a film in which a remembrance enacted on a sound stage and a camera-car ride along a real, present-day superhighway can both be recognized at once as the work of the same imagination.

It is memory that dominates here, however, because Fellini is remembering not only moments from his earlier life, but moments from his earlier films as well. If there is a central experience shared by Fellini heroes of the last ten years, it is to walk into a room where one is greeted by assorted grotesques and sycophants. Since this hero is typically a surrogate for Fellini himself, the scene is often shot from a subjective point of view. In *Fellini's Roma* the scene recurs a couple of times, when young Federico arrives at his lodgings in Rome, for example, and later when he goes to a brothel.

There are many other scenes that are familiar too. The evening that Fellini has us spend in a vaudeville theater recalls a similar evening spent by Giulietta Masina in *Nights of Cabiria*. In another scene, Fellini's camera crew discovers some ancient frescoes in the excavation for a subway tunnel, and the first face we see in the paintings belongs to an old man who works on the camera crew itself. A similar device was used at the end of *Satyricon*, where Fellini match-dissolved the face of Encolpius with a fresco of that face fading from the exposed wall of a ruin centuries later. Finally, a visit to a contemporary Roman street festival reminds us of the outdoor nightclub in *La Dolce Vita*, and a motorcycle gang in the closing scene of the new film swirls through the city's piazzas in the same choreographed fashion with which paparazzi swirled around celebrities in Fellini's 1959 classic. Some of the material that Fellini has used before—the vaudeville theater, for instance—is beautifully renewed in this film, but some of it wasn't Fellini at his best in the first place and doesn't rework well here.

Nor is it only these twice-told takes that become a bit redundant, a bit too familiar, at times. In at least one long episode, an ecclesiastical fashion show, invention fails Fellini too. In comparison to the pace at which Fellini usually develops a comedy sequence, this fashion show is a shaggy-dog story, an overextended metaphor. Because the facetious vestments in the show are modeled on a long, U-shaped runway, Fellini's camera has no choice except to linger on each of them after its startling first impression has passed. Moreover, the shape of the runway restricts him to an invariable tracking shot that must be re-established each time a new garment appears. After two or three numbers go by on the runway, the joke begins to seem tedious. You find yourself wondering again about something that occurred to you during the scenes Fellini borrowed from his own earlier films: is Fellini perhaps beginning to repeat himself?

Many artists do so as they grow older, but it would be premature to say that Fellini is already doing so too. Any scenes in *Fellini's Roma* that seem disappointing serve only to remind us how high our expectations of Fellini are. What the fashion show lacks is a certain tension on which Fellini's direction relies at its best—a tension between his choice of images and his use of the camera to photograph those images. While much of what Fellini puts before the camera is staged like a tableau to be stared at, the camera itself characteristically gives us only a fleeting glimpse of the scene. If we are awe-struck at a Fellini movie, it is not just because his scenes have extraordinary beauty and complexity, but because such scenes are whisked past us and so become evanescent as well as beautiful. Under Fellini's direction the cinema is truly magic, not the magic of deception and tricks, but of phantasmagoria. Surely an imagination as resourceful as his is not exhausted yet.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

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CULTURAL CRITICISM: LEFT, RIGHT, CENTER

SAUL MALOFF

RADICALS OF a certain temperament and cast of mind have long entertained the millennial fantasy—or dream of vengeance—of dismantling, along with the profit system, racism, imperialism, whatever—dismantling and interring the inherited high culture. If all history antedating the revolutionary reconstruction of society can be designated as "pre-history," and accordingly divested of value, then it follows that its artifacts, which are emanations of a society's "superstructure" and therefore contaminated, must be buried in a common grave with the infrastructure.

That this exaggerated version is a parody of serious revolutionary thought should be immediately apparent—a crude form of the mechanistic Marxism that caused Marx in revulsion to protest that he was not a Marxist; yet it has a disheartening way of persisting—of recurring again and again with each new surge of radical energy—in the face of overwhelming evidence amounting to an historical law that, far from being the creative act it proclaims itself to be, this view is destructive, where it is accompanied by state power, not only of culture but of the humane ends of revolutionary action. And it is the certain guarantor, where it is influential but otherwise powerless to coerce assent and practice, that no work of any significance will appear under its auspices.

The cultural incendiarism of the lunatic right is outright unabashed book-burning. It boycotts Jane Fonda's films; it argues from morals and politics, never from aesthetics; and though dangerous and rampant, it is uninteresting, tawdry. But cultural philistinism of the left marches, obliquely, under the banners of art—in the name of art and radicalism argues complexly not for an abrupt end to it all but in the cause of a "new," higher, genuinely revolutionary art, the dialectical opposite of decadent art and by tautological circuit the only art deserving of the name. The groundswell of a radical aesthetic parallels the revival of political radicalism in recent years, in versions black and white; and its latest serious statement, under the prestigious sponsorship of Pantheon's admirable and important "dissenting essays" series (what have been called antitextbooks), may be found in the long introductory essay by Louis Kampf and Paul Lauter to *The Politics of Literature:* Dissenting Essays on the Teaching of English (Pantheon, $10).

In his stateliest episcopal prose, and using the high altar of the first Jefferson lecture (sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities), Lionel Trilling anathematizes Kampf as yet another manifestation of mindlessness and cultural barbarism, as a "disaffection from mind" itself—the death of reason which Trilling and others have been lamenting for some time now. Coincidentally, Trilling's well-publicized attack was made around the time of the appearance of this book, though its actual provocation was Kampf's Presidential Address, or call to arms, to the 1971 convention of the Modern Language Association, especially the latter's characterization of literature as a "diversion, a spectacle" and location of it in an "autonomous realm of aesthetics"—autonomous, that is, from life, reality, "practical activity," above the struggle against "industrial capitalism."

Let us concede for the moment that Trilling speaks from the center, culturally and politically: what really troubles him aren't the sentiments expressed (he went through those wars long before Kampf ever heard the first distant rumors of them); but that—as with the Pentagon and Daniel Ellsberg—one of his own guild should have uttered them—and from the Presidential chair! A traitor on the inside—the chairman of the board taking to the hills immediately after the annual stockholders meeting, his attaché case stuffed with fuses, negotiable bonds, beret, nylon beard, starched fatigues.

In truth, Kampf is not a figure to strike terror in the throne rooms of the Academy. He worries *me,* however; but I am of the left, and I read him with the heavy sense that I've been there before. Often. Make every allowance: that, by his own account, Kampf was turned on by the events of 1968, born again in the aftermath of Cambodia; and that, given the opportunity to live out the fantasy—the palace revolution in the MLA had, against all expectations, succeeded—he couldn't resist scandalizing the bourgeoisie. (The title of the Address is: "It's Alright, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding): Literature and Language in the Academy." Wow! That's laying it on them! That's telling it like it is!) Not deliberately, though the possibilities for comedy were infinitely rich—Louis Kampf is no Lucky Jim; in fact he's rather dour, grave as is befitting a man upon whom History has thrust weighty responsibilities. He would not have seen the joke in his demanding of the MLA that it enlist forthwith in the social revolution. Nor, apparently, does Trilling, who is kept very busy discerning signs of the Decline and Fall in last year's student demands and this semester's changes in curriculum. Strangely, Trilling did not see fit to point out that—apart from a few passing and slighting references to Matthew Arnold, Kant, and Lord Kames (they're all dead and good riddance), Kampf mentions no writers other than Malcolm X, Eldridge Cleaver and George Jackson, and these, not merely for the pleasure of hearing those names boom like cannonballs in the

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marble halls of the Americana Hotel, but as exemplary prosateurs, our contemporary masters. Kampf is pretty cagey about this: he calls upon his auditors, their spirits sodden with years of reading freshman themes, to "consider the condition of North American prose" and to conclude with him that "our teaching seems to have produced no George Jacksons, no Malcolm Xs, nor Eldridge Cleavers—all of whom learned their craft in prison." That they learned their craft from certain models—by which I mean books and writers—seems not to have occurred to Kampf; any more than it occurred to him that other writers learned theirs in exactly the same way, though they encountered these models in the classroom rather than in a prison library. (I exclude that margin or originality which is not "learned" at all, either in prison or in the classroom.) Such are the bizarre lengths to which bookish revolutionary melodramatics can lead; and I allow myself to think that such obviously "literary" writers as Cleaver and Jackson would have agreed. But Kampf's cravenness exceeds even that, else why would he reverse the order—chronological, quantitative, and I daresay, of significance—of the murders at Kent and Jackson State?

But all this is of no great moment—squabbles in the committee-room among contending factions of dons. Or rather it would be of no great moment, at least for me, if Kampf had not been so stoned by his discourse in that heady atmosphere that he decided, with Lauter, to elaborate the arguments and carry them to the left (as I shall loosely define the natural audience for Pantheon antitexts). And what arguments, what depressing arguments, not only by reason of their terrible history but for and in themselves. The manner of address is wretchedly appropriate: jackboot prose theatrically menacing in tone —scoffing, hortatory, bombastic, contemptuous; the dream not of what the future might be but of how power might be deployed under new arrangements. Tripping high on dogma and space fantasies, the authors cannot have heard themselves speaking. We are returned, God save us, to the realm of the "specific social effects of literature," never mind any of your fancy talk about art; and to pronouncements that "high culture propagates the values of those who rule and therefore helps to maintain current social arrangements." The voice that pronounces this encapsulated cultural history never falters, never qualifies. These revelations, acquired through "political experience," overcame them in 1968, whereupon they saw, in the same shaft of light, that their *"institutional* roles as teachers, scholars, and critics of literature—the institutional role of literature itself —did not stand in critical opposition to the governing culture, but were expressions of it."

Nor is that all. They assert, in what will seem to some a thunderclap of non-sequitur, that political and ideological struggle, not "the world of professional criticism," began "to define for us what is of literary value." Literature, removed to the "abstract realm of the aesthetic" is reduced to triviality, "becomes a spectator sport, a plaything for those with leisure, a source of cheap — though perhaps desperately needed—fantasies"; and in the academy "not merely self-serving for the faculty but injurious to the students," teaching and criticism having become "instruments of oppression." Literature and literary "practice," as everyone must know, are "weapons in maintaining or transforming the received order of social relations"; and "appropriating these weapons, making of them an integral part of the struggle for socialism, is at the heart of a socialist literary practice." It remains only to cite some of the better-known passages from Mao's "Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art," and this Kampf and Lauter do, ending on a note of triumph: the argument has been irrefutably demonstrated and capped by the unanswerable authority. Never mind that Mao's little lessons, which are sheer cant in any case, were taught in another place, at another time.

Trilling, in what has become the conventional wisdom, makes an obligatory reference (quoting J. H. Plumb) to the "death of a past" as a striking feature of contemporary mindlessness —"that mutation of culture . . . which makes the idea of the past unnecessary and, for many, nothing but limiting and obstructive." But Kampf and Lauter aren't "kids," they're learned doctors; and I'm not referring to the late Middle Ages, I have in mind events lying within fresh memory, ongoing processes: the immediate revolutionary past and its present consequences. There is no other way to account for the language, tone, ideas (if they may called that), manner—of approach, statement, argument—than to suppose either that, upon sober reflection, their polemic struck them as something quite new and wondrous under the sun or that they are stone-deaf.

At no point in their long diatribe do they give evidence of knowing that all those notes and chords have been struck before and that each time they sounded a death-knell. No sign that these questions have a long, and awful, ancestry in the history of left-wing cultural polemics; not the slightest clue of their knowing that by this time, Mao notwithstanding, we know all too well the look of concepts and sound of a language that are closer in spirit to cultural fascism than to any of the forms of socialism we still dream of attaining. The heart sinks at the prospect of arguing issues long since resolved—one would have thought forever—by sickening historical experience, nowhere and at no time redeemed by the smallest token of artistic consequence that took its impulse from structures laid down by cultural bureaus. Only one consequence is possible, and Isaac Babel gave the most eloquent expression to that when he said, in his last public address, that he had discovered a new aesthetic—the aesthetic of silence.

I am exaggerating only a little when I say that, reading Kampf and Lauter, you would suppose that of the past not much more than working-class ballads, Thoreau and Rebecca Harding Davis' *Life in the Iron Mills* are worth retaining; and of the contemporaries, some anti-war poems, some blacks, along with Neruda, Cesaire, Lu Hsun.

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(Short lecture: Neruda is a great poet who is also a Communist; he is not a Communist poet, great or otherwise; commissars don't read Neruda, they merely point to him with pride of possession—gravely qualified pride.) Even the customary obeisance to Balzac is omitted. And, bewilderingly, in this fifty-page essay, there is not a single reference to any of the distinguished Marxist or Marxist-influenced critics as a possible forebear of "socialist literary practice"—not to Lukacs, or Marcuse, or Adorno, or Benjamin, or Bloch, or Sartre, not to mention Marx or Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. Not one of them, not even as a point of departure.

The past is dead. History began in May of 1968. But this is consonant with a hangman's idea of literature and art as "weapons," as stern, grim, audio-visual aids to "struggle"—a grandiose, deluded conception, in any case, of what art is, and does; and, indeed, of what "struggle" is and how revolutionary change comes about. By now it is hardly special wisdom to know that art is not produced by diktat or historical necessity—only apparatchiks, functionaries and power-brokers think so, those who cherish unanimous resolutions and hate art. Come to that, art isn't "produced" at all; it is created and made, composed and shaped, by artists who do what they can and must when left absolutely alone to do what they will. It "changes" nothing; it makes nothing "happen."

Strictures and animadversions we get aplenty from Kampf and Lauter; but nowhere do we get a glimmering of the sense that art has something to do with pleasure, sheer joy—hedonistic, primitive, irresponsible, deeply felt or boisterous—under feudalism, capitalism, imperialism; and under socialism too, unless they suppose the sensorium itself will wither away as the state does. Severity, constriction, joylessness inform ideas of art throughout; art is edifying, didactic, a fount of public virtue and right sentiments; it is never simply delightful or moving in a private way. Resentment is the prevailing current, and contempt—allegedly for "high culture," but actually for art, properly speaking, itself. Exercising their late discovery through struggle of moral and literary "value," they consign to limbo all works which fail their means test; and their limbo consists of one large, undifferentiated chamber, commodious enough to include "the thrill of *The Female Eunuch*, the sniffles of *Love Story*, or indeed the ironies of Donne and the symbols of Yeats." So much for ironies and symbols; so much for Donne and Yeats. Boiled down, Greer and Segal make the same lard. Not many, not much will survive this kulturkampf.

Yet, lest they be misunderstood, the authors appear, for a fleeting moment, to moderate dogma. "We don't propose," they allow, "that there are simple, direct, one-to-one relationships between literature and action, between the poem and the shaping of a reader's sensibilities"; and, the qualifications dismissed, they propose precisely that: ". . . such relationships do exist, however, that can be opened and explored.

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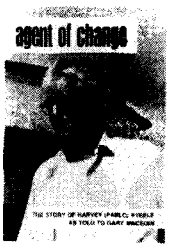

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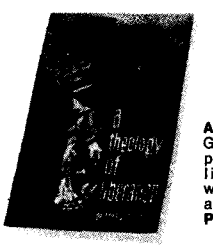

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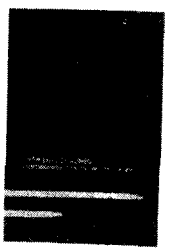

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And further, that in our culture—white, Western, male, and bourgeois, for the most part—one primary effect of the process of cultivation is to diminish people's desire or capacity to act for change." Thus does culture make eunuchs of us all. But if to admire, say, Yeats is to render oneself unfit for radical politics, to lobotomize one into servile compliance with reaction, if this is one primary effect of the very process of cultivation (what are the other primary effects?), then its absence, presumably, is the condition which breeds revolutionary cadres and heroes. By this curious reading of history, revolutionary movements are staffed by the uncultivated—another version of the unwashed masses.

In the coda immediately following, the authors conclude with a pious prayer, but not without a final swipe at poor Yeats: "Ultimately, the test of this book is not how many golden phrases we have turned 'to keep a drowsy Emperor awake.' But rather, how helpful our writing becomes in creating a humane and socialist society." The idea of an approved literature in any guise—the very idea that there can and should be an approved literature and art—is the most certain indicator we have, as we try to imagine the nature and quality of a socialist future—that whatever society evolves in its name will certainly not be humane, any more than it can be, in some still-acceptable sense, socialist.

Only the hot-eyed innocent or newly-arrived, for whom the past is so dead it might just as well never have existed, will mistake this demagoguery for radical politics and aesthetics; and only to them will my own rather conventional espousal of anarchic freedom for art and the imagination seem bourgeois and "rightist." History has reversed these categories: vulgar, pseudo-Marxism is not Marxism; Philistinism isn't populism; an historical and intellectual void isn't new ground; kitsch isn't art; polemics create nothing but counter-polemics—or—when they are reenforced by power-silence, or official, approved posters, uplifting verses and tales, public monuments and other artifacts; and the simple-hearted demand that the State get off artists' backs, and stay off, is neither right nor left nor center—only urgent, of the essence, a matter of life and death, a truly humane socialism as opposed to yet another slogan-mongering mockery of our hopes.

Wars & Rumors of War

ROGER L. SHINN

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JAMES H. FOREST

It would be good to say that Roger Shinn has written an important, provocative reflection on war. God knows he tried to. And even I know that, at moments, it is provocative. But the phrase that best describes it (to borrow from Dan Berrigan) is "unflavored yogurt." (I am thinking especially of those pasteurized, homogenized, cornstarch stiffened varieties that seem to have everything in them but the essence of yogurt.)

It is that unmysterious blandness that assaults me in Shinn's recollection of an encounter with a theological student, Russ Flesher, who was then considering military service. Flesher wanted "to bounce his ideas off me."

> Yes, I answered him, I had once left theological studies to learn the skills of the infantryman and to fight a war. No, I had not had any dramatic yearning for combat . . .
>
> . . . We exchanged opinions about the war in Vietnam and found that we disagreed . . .He had a sober and reasoned argument as to why he thought our nation had a military responsibility in Indochina. I told him . . . that we were making a grave mistake there. But we did not argue long, and neither of us questioned the good faith of the other. His real concern was not enthusiasm for war but a conviction that he should not be spared the ordeal of his generation.

So we talked further, and I gradually guessed that he was in

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fact about to decide to enter on active duty. Perhaps I could and should have done more to dissuade him of his judgment about the war. But granted the honesty of his conviction to act . . . I told him that I was convinced of his integrity and would honor whatever decision he made.

Russ Flesher was killed in Vietnam.

"I could not reject his conviction to act . . . I was convinced of his integrity and would honor whatever decision he made."

Whether or not you kill Vietnamese, I will respect that decision. Whether or not you help demolish Southeast Asia, I will respect that decision.

I wonder if Shinn, or any of us, would be so generous with our respect if the issue were the dumping of mercury into the public reservoirs (far less terrifying than any soldier's role in Southeast Asia)? Would we respect the decision of the executives and staff who thought their act a fair one, who were clearly sincere, who thought their opponents unduly alarmed, who even proved their good faith by drinking a glass of their mercury-seasoned water for breakfast each morning?

Shinn still seems at home with his conversation with Russ Flesher that day. "Perhaps I should have done more to dissuade him . . ." Perhaps. No breast-beating about how much more he should have done, no anger with the rest of us for not having done much, much more to keep such bright, sensitive kids from coming home in plastic sacks and sealed boxes. Nor does Shinn shower us with paragraphs of curiosity regarding the consequences for the Vietnamese of this additional uninvited guest who came, presumably, to protect them from the Communists.

It is a bit puzzling, for elsewhere Shinn points out that he is no pacifist and that his active opposition to the Vietnam war is based on his affirmation of the "classic doctrine of the just (or justifiable) war." After all, he states, Christians most often "have regarded war as sometimes a tragic necessity, justifiable if fought with conscientious restraints to repel a conqueror or resist an intolerable wrong." While he doesn't explore how the just war theories of classical days are to accommodate themselves to the technological, demographic and military realities of the present, it would seem clear that if these theories have any current potential validity, it would be on behalf of the Vietnamese nationalists, not our B-52-souled selves. As a determined advocate of the continuing relevance of the just war theory, one would imagine Shinn would be even more militant than the pacifists (for whom this war is merely the latest issue of an ancient pornographic magazine) in opposing America's particular role in that war.

But apparently not. The main issue (judging from his chapter, "Five Patriots") is not whether anyone should fight but whether the fighters are sincere. He has devoted his energies generously to working for the recognition of the right to conscientious objection to particular wars. One suspects this

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goal is of remote interest to those whose hearts freeze with dread whenever a silver glint bursts over the horizon. Being bombed by men who are sincere hardly dilutes the agony at all.

Shinn's affirmation of the continuing possibility of just wars puzzles me further when, in a chapter on "The Instrumentality of War," he grants that the use of nuclear weapons is intolerable, but then goes on to speak of the "impressive logic" within the "absurdity" and "madness" of the nuclear weapons race. "Some say that no morality or rationality can justify a civilization, wrecked in smouldering ruins, in retaliating against a foe whom it cannot defeat. Yet the power to do just that may be the power that deters the foe from initiating a strike."

". . . may be . . ."

Shinn promptly grants, two paragraphs later, that the "grim" and "bizarre" logic of deterrence may abruptly cease working. "It may cease . . . before this book is published—in which case the book will probably not be published and I shall not be available to retract the statement."

Even so, he says, "the result of deterrence has been no mean achievement: the interval of time since the end of World War II is already greater than the interval between World Wars I and II."

Perhaps we should drop a few copies of this book along with the usual cargo being donated from B-52s—our beneficiaries in Southeast Asia will doubtless be relieved to hear how well deterrence is working.

We can similarly relieve ourselves of anxieties about future nuclear explosions within the geological fault beneath the Aleutian Islands because, as headlines have testified, there has as yet been no earthquake, no tidal wave, no submerged California or other cataclysm in consequence of the earlier tests.

Perhaps this sort of Russian roulette can become, officially as in reality, our new national sport. It even has theological endorsement.

Perhaps the intellectual and moral ambiguities of Shinn's views are rooted in his war experience, a war he chose to fight in after long rounds of discussions with other seminarians (who, in several instances, refused to register and who went off to prison as draft-resisters). For Shinn, his military choice remains a good one. He speaks affectionately of the boots he wore on battlefields and in prison camps, boots, despite all wear, he still occasionally uses. He notes with similar warmth that he can still fit into his uniform.

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REVIEWERS

SAUL MALOFF, a regular contributor, has just completed a new novel. He is the author of *Happy Families.*

JAMES H. FOREST is a peace activist recently returned from a month in Paris with the Vietnamese Buddhist Peace Delegation. He has published an account of that visit, *Only the Rice Loves You* (The Hoa Binh Press).

MARK TAYLOR teaches in the English Department at Manhattan College.

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His war experiences, which fill more than half this book, seem rather routine, perhaps because nothing is so difficult to avoid (on television, in films, on book racks) as the varieties of military experience in World War II. World War II and our various American Indian Wars seem to be the principal tourist resorts of the American imagination.

Shinn's recollections are of the familiar fabric: explosions on every side, day and night, acts of heroism and community, shattered bodies, near-deaths, capture, forced marches, interrogations, glimpses of the humanity of the enemy, similar glimpses of the brutality of one's allies. And finally, happily for Shinn, survival and liberation.

There is a nostalgia for those years, despite their agony. After all, it was exciting, good and evil seemed to be sufficiently separated, and it ended happily.

So it is that Shinn has the verification of memory in seeing war (in a chapter on its "expressive meaning") as fulfilling positive potentialities in humanness: war can be an occasion for comradeship, heroism, a valid channel for the aggressive dimensions of self, even a means of achieving identity.

Those of us slow to celebrate these mystic qualities in war are taken to task for being possessive of our lives. "No one," Shinn writes, "can by taking thought add a cubit to his stature . . . Yet we human beings are so possessive that we lay hold on the gift of life as though we had earned it and could not let it be pried away."

But the question that has been repeatedly raised by opponents of war is overlooked: we are less jealous of our personal right to life than jealous for the right of others to life. War is no longer a matter of putting voluntary combatants on collision courses with each other on large, uninhabited fields. We haven't had such wars in a very long time. The casualties of war are now rarely those who wanted war or chose its uniforms.

"War," Shinn rightly notes, "asks ordinary people to be heroic." Sadly, he speaks only passingly, with seemingly passive attention, of the possibility that peacemaking could involve as much heroism, as much community, as much self-identity as the familiar script of killing. Could not peacemaking offer, in fact, a great deal more psychic income? Roger Shinn's nostalgia for war seems to all but preclude the question.

IN BRIEF

A STUBBORN CASE *by Charles Frankel, Norton, $6.95.* In his first novel Charles Frankel examines recent campus radicalism and asks, urgently, why professors, in acceding to inarticulate demands for Relevance, delight in jettisoning the culture we have entrusted to them. John Burgess, the book's protagonist, is nearly alone in resisting the cliché-ridden students of his anonymous university, and though he fights to no worse than a draw, the capitulation of his faculty colleagues—ambitious, craven, or weary?—remains enigmatic. The book provides a beautifully-paced read, and its sympathies are exquisite, but the bad guys are such caricatures—as Burgess admits—that they can neither enhance our understanding nor engage our pity. The few good guys, also, are more occupants of positions than they are people, except, notably, for Otto Vogel, a student who dies defining the love that others talk so tiresomely about, and who suggests that, with another novel or two, Frankel's characters might catch up with his stories.

MARK TAYLOR

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 123)

laywomen are going to need all the awakening and support they can get, from media such as *Commonweal.* Might I suggest a series: "How the Church has been doing-in Women For the Past 100 Years, and What *You* can Do About it Today"?

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